



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE**

**Alliance VISTA Program**  
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## Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits, VISTA

2012-2013

Phoenix, Arizona

Legislative Districts 1-30

### **PROGRAM FAST FACTS**

**Congressional District(s): 1-9**  
**State Legislative District(s): 1-30**  
**Service Area by County/City: AZ Statewide**  
**Project Federal Share: \$297,624**  
**Project Local Match: \$66,573**  
**Resource Development: \$529,800**  
**Community Volunteers Recruited: 273**  
**Volunteer Hours Served: 845**  
**Value of Volunteer Hours: \$17,000**

\*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer  
Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

### **Mission, Vision & History**

The Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits, with more than 600 members, is a unifying association of nonprofits throughout the state. Formed in 2004 to advance the common interests of all nonprofits in Arizona, the Alliance's immediate beneficiaries are all Arizona's nonprofits and indirectly the communities they serve. The mission of the Alliance is to better people and communities by serving, supporting, protecting and promoting Arizona's nonprofit community. We serve nonprofits by providing quality information, training, capacity-building services and networking opportunities. We support nonprofits by offering savings through group-buying discount programs and other leveraged buying power. We protect nonprofits by advancing nonprofit advocacy on common issues with state, national and local decision makers. We promote nonprofits by projecting a collective voice to the public about the sector's essential contributions and significant challenges in our communities.

### **Community Need**

Through a series of focus sessions conducted by the Alliance throughout the state in 2006, nonprofit leaders and key stakeholders voiced clearly and consistently their need for more support in building strong organizations. This need is accentuated by the ongoing Recession. Since 2008, the Alliance has surveyed nonprofits every year about the impact of the Recession on their operations. The consistent trend has been declining or plateauing revenues combined with growing demand for services, which is stretching many nonprofits to the breaking point. Therefore, the Alliance has identified as a chief priority the need to grow the capacities of Arizona nonprofit organizations to serve and strengthen their communities, especially in rural areas, through AmeriCorps VISTA.

### **Overview: Program Activities, Goals and Priority Areas**

The Alliance VISTA Program partners with local community agencies throughout the state of Arizona to develop and support unique community based VISTA projects. We support projects in each of the following National Priority Areas: *Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures, Education and Veterans & Military Families.*

Typical VISTA activities can include: researching and applying for grants, developing and implementing volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, planning new programs, designing curriculum, creating a community outreach plan, designing promotional materials, and more.

Although the goals of each of our VISTA projects are unique based on the needs of our partner agencies, the Alliance VISTA Program has 3 main program goals:

- Increase community impact by increasing the number and depths of services offered by the community agency.
- Increase the awareness of the community agency and their services within the community.
- Help community agencies better measure and sell their impact.

# Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits, VISTA



## Program Impact Examples

The United Way of Northern Arizona Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) initiative helps community members living with limited resources receive their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). During the 2013 tax season, Alliance AmeriCorps VISTA Jeff Schlueter coordinated and led the UWNA VITA program to help over 2,200 low and moderate income families to receive over \$3.3 million in tax returns. Jeff was able to recruit and train a diverse community of volunteers allowing the UWNA to increase its number of tax preparation sites. This allowed the UWNA VITA program to expand its services to more individuals and families throughout northern Arizona, including rural and tribal communities.

Alliance AmeriCorps VISTA Kristen Coco developed strategies and implemented tools for measuring the community impact of the YWCA's Own It Financial Education Program. Kristen developed exit evaluations to gain program input at the end of each class and a follow up survey 6-12 months after class graduation. The surveys specifically measured the behavior change of Own It students and whether or not they have reduced debt and/or increased savings. The results of Kristen's measurement tool has shown that 75% of program participants will reduce debt or increase savings.

## Partnerships

Alliance VISTA Current Project Partners:

- Old Pueblo Community Services
- PASSAGE Transition Coalition
- Arizona's Children Association
- Housing Authority of Maricopa County
- Diaper Bank of Southern Arizona
- Catholic Community Services
- Yuma Community Foundation
- Arizona YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix
- Benevilla
- DNA People's Legal Services
- United Way of Northern Arizona
- Sahaurita Food Bank
- Southwest Conservation Corps
- Maricopa Oral Health Leaders, Advocates & Resources Coalition (MOLAR)
- City High School

## Program Impact Examples Cont'd

Alliance AmeriCorps VISTA Colleen Wallace served with the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona in Tucson, Arizona for two consecutive VISTA terms of service. Colleen focused on building the capacity and enhancing the food bank's grant writing efforts which resulted with the Community Food Bank being awarded over 3 million dollars thanks to Colleen's efforts! These grants funded a variety of community projects including backpack programs, a workforce development culinary training program, a farmer's market and a variety of local rural food banks.